

# NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Markey Notes Dirty Bomb Materials Available On Internet, Loose Regulations in U.S.**

*Markey sends letter to NRC warning of danger*

**Washington, DC:** Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Member of the Homeland Security Committee and the House Energy and Commerce Committee, the panel which oversees the regulation of nuclear materials, today released a letter to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) regarding numerous security gaps associated with the regulations used to safeguard materials that could be used to construct dirty bombs, such as cobalt-60 and cesium-137.

"I am stunned that nearly 3 years after the terrorist attacks of September 11, and in the face of overwhelming evidence that Al Qaeda is trying to obtain nuclear materials, the NRC still hasn't finalized new regulations dealing with the security of these materials," said Rep. Markey. "At the same time, anyone who surfs the Internet can find numerous sources of nuclear materials that could be used in a radioactive dirty bomb. We need stronger domestic and international regulations to deal with this 'atomic Ebay' in which any buyers or sellers can bid on and buy the deadly substances that could be used by terrorists to inflict massive damage on our country."

Rep. Markey's letter contained questions regarding several potential security flaws including:

- A vendor was listing a 1720 Curie cobalt source, available for *free* to anyone willing to pay for its shipping (see <http://www.dotmed.com/listing/65123>). 1720 Curies is more than enough radiation to kill a human being within minutes of exposure, and it is likely that the source is in a semi-dispersible form of metal pellets that could be particularly damaging if used in a dirty bomb. When Rep. Markey's staff contacted the vendor to determine whether the offer was genuine, it was learned that the vendor is located in Beirut, Lebanon, and that the source is available to anyone who can arrange for it to be dismantled and shipped. Numerous other websites were determined to provide radioactive sources for sale or trade.
- An additional company providing radioactive materials for export from the U.S. to customers overseas is even more disturbing. The North American Technical Services, Inc. (see <http://www.nats-usa.com/>) has offices in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Tunisia, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and lists numerous customers in the Middle East. Recent press reports have also indicated that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has raided the home that belongs to the owner of this company, that he has been placed on a "no-fly list," that he has made financial contributions to charities that are suspected of supporting terrorist groups, and that he sent email to an individual recently arrested in the United Kingdom for raising funds for terrorist groups.
- While the NRC recently proposed a rule requiring exporters of radioactive material to confirm that the proposed recipient has a valid license, there does not appear to be a similar requirement for domestic sales, raising the possibility that a terrorist could simply shop for dirty bomb ingredients in the USA using falsified documentation.

Rep. Markey is the author of the Dirty Bomb Prevention Act and has repeatedly attempted to prod the NRC into action on the problem of unaccounted-for dirty bomb materials. For a copy of the letter released today or more information on the Dirty Bomb Prevention Act and the problem of missing dirty bomb materials, please go to <http://www.house.gov/markey/dirtybombs.htm>.

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